



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Patuxent Institution Annual Plant Sale Begins Thursday, May 10

Inmate-grown plants sold to benefit horticulture program which has been a model for many other prisons

TOWSON, MD (May 9, 2007)---Patuxent Institution, long renowned for its treatment and remediation programs, has also quietly gained a reputation for something else that's highly successful and unique among prisons: its inmate-training horticulture program. On Thursday and Friday of this week, Patuxent will sell hundreds of inmate-grown annuals, perennials, and houseplants, plus a few tomato plants, with proceeds to be put right back into the horticulture program.

Patuxent's Horticultural Therapy Program trains inmates to grow organic plants. Inmates who complete the yearlong training become certified master gardeners thanks to a course supervised by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service. The student-inmates receive educational materials on horticulture and participate in therapeutic sessions which cover topics such as relapse prevention, communication, and work ethics. The horticulture curriculum includes lectures and hands-on work in soil, composting, vegetables, fruits, herbs, wildlife gardening, and landscape design.

The Patuxent program has been around for more than a decade, and has served as a model for many other prisons, including the extensive horticulture/greenhouse/ meditation garden effort which began three years ago at the Western Correctional Institution in Cumberland. The Patuxent program's mission is threefold: to reduce violent behavior, eliminate addictions, and teach a vocational skill.

Patuxent's program is so successful that in the past, the inmates and their Master Gardener instructors have helped conduct an extensive study of bulbs which was eventually published in *Consumer Reports*.

This year's plant sale is open only to Patuxent employees.

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